




CITY OF GAINESVILLE

*Parks, Recreation & Cultural
Affairs*

Memo

To: Cynthia W. Curry, Interim City Manager
Via: Tony R. Jones, Acting Chief Operating Officer
From: Roxana Gonzalez, Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs Director 
Date: June 16, 2022
Re: Thelma A. Boltin Center Wild Spaces & Public Places Project Update

This memorandum is offered as an update on the Thelma A. Boltin Center Wild Spaces & Public Places (WSPP) project. The memo will 1) provide a summary of recent activities, and 2) outline the project's path forward.

The Thelma A. Boltin Center is a historic building and an active city recreation center. The building was last renovated in 1999 and was identified as a WSPP project. On August 22, 2019, the General Policy Committee approved a comprehensive renovation to bring the facility to current standards and to maximize its public utility. Staff was directed to negotiate design and engineering services for the development of construction documents. A Request for Qualifications solicitation was posted on January 13, 2020 and the City Commission authorized WSPP to negotiate a contract with Wannemacher Jensen Architects, Inc. (WJA) on May 21, 2020. A contract with WJA was executed on November 24, 2020 for these design services.

In December 2020 city staff identified what appeared to be the structural failure of the roof in the Thelma A. Boltin Center auditorium. The City's Facilities Department immediately hired a company to provide engineering consultation and temporarily shored the building. City Facilities then solicited a bid for a structural engineering firm to perform a comprehensive assessment of the structural deficiencies.

The City received a report from Sputo and Lammert Engineering, LLC in November 2021 and has held a series of meetings to discuss the findings. In summary, the structural engineer found that the structural damage in the auditorium is significant and warrants both complete demolition and replacement of the auditorium wing, *or* demolition of the entire facility. The latter is the economically feasible path to pursue.

City staff had a discussion with the City Commissioners at the April 14, 2022 General Policy Committee meeting. At that meeting the General Policy Committee gave City staff direction to start working with the design team to design a *new* Thelma Boltin Center. City staff provided a courtesy update to the Historic Preservation Board on May 3, 2022.

Following the April 14, 2022 GPC meeting City staff have been meeting periodically with the design team from WJA to outline the timeline for the conceptual design of a new building, community engagement and hearings before the Historic Preservation Board. City staff have also had a series of meetings with staff from Austin Historical, a company who specializes in the reuse and restoration of historic windows.

A rough project timeline includes the following activities:

- May, 2022 - Conceptual design kick-off meeting with City Staff and WJA
- June, 2022 - Refine the conceptual design, identify site opportunities and constraints
- July, 2022 - Hold 2 focus group meetings to receive input on the conceptual design and future building program. One group will include dance groups and performing artists, the second group will be composed of the local neighborhood to include the Thelma Boltin community garden group, the Duckpond Neighborhood Association, the Northeast Neighbors Association, and groups who previously rented the facility.
- July, 2022 - City staff will begin the *procurement process* for the demolition of the building. This will require a centralized solicitation due to the dollar amount of the work.
- August, 2022 - Refine the conceptual design and compile documentation to submit for demolition approval from the Historic Preservation Board and Department of Sustainable Development
- September/October, 2022 - Preliminary hearing before the Historic Preservation Board to request a Certificate of Appropriateness for demolition of the Thelma A. Boltin Center building
- October/November, 2022 - Request utilities to be cut from the building (assumes that the Historic Preservation Board approves the initial demolition request)
- December, 2022 - Building demolition begins (assumes that the procurement process runs smoothly and that the Historic Preservation Board approved the demolition)
- October, 2022 through April, 2023 - Contract negotiation, design and permitting for a new Thelma Boltin Center
- Summer, 2023 - Procurement for construction of the new building
- Fall/Winter, 2023 - Construction begins on the new building
- Winter, 2024 - Construction completes on the new building

Please note that the milestones and dates provided are based on the best-case scenarios for this project. Dates may shift to the right based upon delays in the design effort, procurement and/or permitting processes. Staff is mindful of the historical significance of this structure to our community and has taken this into consideration. We will continue to work closely with the City's Historic Preservation Officer, the Historic Preservation Board and the City Communications Team to bring this project to fruition.

Copy: Phil Mann, Special Advisor to the City Manager
Betsy Waite, Wild Spaces & Public Places Director
David Risor, Assistant Facilities Manager